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**AIRGRAM**

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SUBJECT : Assessment of Eritrea

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DEPARTMENT PASS AMBASSADOR HOLMES

- A. Summary
- B. The Eritrean Background
- C. The Present Government of Eritrea
- D. IEG Assets and Attitudes
- E. ELF Strategy, Tactics, and Options
- F. Present IEG Strategy and Tactics vs. the ELF
- G. IEG Prospects and Options
- H. Recommended U.S. Policy

## GROUP 1

Excluded from automatic downgrading  
and declassification.

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Drafted by: AMB/SRGammon:je 4/27/67

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A. Summary

The insurgency in Eritrea with its separatist design is becoming an ever more pressing problem for the Ethiopian Government. The Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) has its origin in the area's and Empire's heterogeneity and colonial past. It is gathering strength, resources, determination and sophistication. It is assisted by military, financial and political aid from Moslem and, likely, Communist states, and is bolstered by the passivity if not defections among Christian Eritreans ever more disenchanted with an uncertain and ineffectual regime.

The IEG early fumbled its opportunity to create a basis of true integration on a community of economic and political interest. Instead, the IEG's technique has unvaryingly been one of bribery, intrigue and, when in doubt, coercion. Thus, Ethiopian ineptness and insensitivity, growing accord among Moslems involved in forging an Eritrean future, Christian disillusion and foreign meddling, all compound to threaten the IEG capacity to maintain its hold.

Unless major changes occur in the Eritrean equation in the relatively near future, there is a distinct possibility of loss of Eritrea to Ethiopia and of Kagnew Station to the United States, of acceleration beyond the limits of IEG control of the centrifugal forces elsewhere in Ethiopia, and of a major and adverse shift in the balance of power and influence in the Red Sea Basin.

United States policy must take these ineluctable elements into full consideration, including the relatively little room for maneuver we have between the IEG and the Eritrean Liberation Front, and the few resources we can effectively bring to bear. Within that frame, there are actions which we can take, first to reduce our immediate vulnerability in Eritrea and, second, to move the IEG away from an overly centralized approach to a more enlightened and effective one which will help close the now-growing breach.

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Addis AbabaB. The Eritrean Background

The development of an active Eritrean separatist movement stems from the separate development of Eritrea during 65 years of foreign rule (55 years of Italian colonial and 10 years of British military occupations) and from the centralizing mission of Amhara Emperor Haile Selassie I.

Although historically the maritime province had long had an uneasy connection with Ethiopian rulers, it was a loyal province of the Tigrean Emperor Yohannes IV prior to the Italians' arrival in the 1880's. In 1952, after 10 years of British military government and by a characteristic UN compromise solution ending six years of great-power wrangling, Eritrea was awarded to Ethiopia -- but not quite. The UN decreed that the territory be federated with Ethiopia but enjoy complete internal autonomy, its own flag, and democratic self-government.

The decade 1952-62 was marked by the dissipation of the considerable degree of support for Ethiopia among Eritreans, a change of heart and of mind that was in large measure stimulated by the imperfectly concealed machinations of the Emperor's representatives who worked to destroy the federal solution and to substitute incorporation of Eritrea into the Empire.

While there are those who assume that the Emperor, in keeping with Moliere's "un grand seigneur, mechanist homme" view of the aristocrats, had an evil design on Eritrea from the outset, detailed probing of anti-IEG Eritreans in the Establishment are persuasive that it was not the case. Indeed, nothing in Ethiopia of that epoch was ever planned; it was, and largely is, a wilderness of happenings and happenstances that provide opportunities to be seized by someone. The most likely and, to me, acceptable explanation, is that until 1956 the Emperor did not formulate even the adumbrations of an Eritrean policy beyond his Federation victory at the UN.

It was his son-in-law, that delightful but rascally incarnation of Moliere's view, Ras Andargatchew Masai and his Imperial spouse, Princess Tenagne Wora, who had more to do with the Eritrean tragedy than any others. Wherever the handsome Ras has descended, he has viewed and left the locale like a plague of locusts. The Ras with his feudal title and Imperial protection looked upon Eritrea as a fief to be plundered. It was inevitable that the then young and idealistic Tedla Beiru, head of the Unionist party and the first Chief Minister of Eritrea, would challenge the free-wheeling Ras. Tedla took Federation seriously and meant it to work; unfortunately he chose to challenge the Ras rather than to use the feudal lord's avarice as a funnel for central development funds and for consolidation of Eritrea's status. It was predictable that he would lose

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the battle and that, in a society built on pillars of loyalty to the throne and retribution for disloyalty, he would be swung into limbo by the Ras and his Lady.

The cunning, ruthless and grasping Ras was fortuitously served by events in the Red Sea Basin which aroused the ever latent suspicions of the Emperor. Tedla was maneuvered out of his job (and out of Ethiopia in 1955 as Minister to Sweden). It was in 1956 that Nasser emerged as the head of a dynamic Arab unity movement; and it was this shift in the power balance of the Middle East which, taken together with the winds of change sweeping French North Africa in the same year, the independence of Sudan in 1956 and the promise in 1956 of independence to Nkrumah that finally converted the Emperor from an "orientalist" to his present Africanist policy.

Again, in 1962, when Nasser moved his army into the Yemen, the Emperor decided to counter swiftly by finalizing the incorporation of Eritrea; within weeks, he squeezed the Eritrean Assembly into uttering its "unanimous" vote of acquiescence.

While it would be foolish to ascribe to Nasser or to developments in the Red Sea Basin/<sup>or</sup> on the African continent the entire rationale for what occurred in Eritrea, it would be equally mindless to ignore the general foreign political framework in which Imperial cerebrations grind. It is not only in Eritrea that these external developments affect Ethiopian policy and attitudes; there is hardly a reform taken by the Emperor in his 50 years of power that did not originate from abroad or was not a reaction to what was occurring outside Ethiopia's borders. The fear of Islam is congenital among Amharas and not without reason or memory.

Whether the Emperor was prophetic or whether he engaged in self-fulfilling prophecy is debatable. But he was unwilling to risk a less-than-complete hold on Eritrea, after the emergence of Nasser's dynamic and awakening appeal to previously apathetic Arab and Moslem masses throughout the Basin of the Red Sea. Nor was or is the Emperor unaware of the tenuous Amhara hold on his conglomeration of minorities in the other peripheral areas of the Empire; an autonomous Eritrea would only serve as a model for their future. To a monarch who had spent some 40 years in centralizing (and secularizing) Ethiopia, a Federated Eritrea would be tempting God and Nasser.

But if the Emperor was once again prescient, his representatives' actions did serve to fulfill his prophecy. By deviousness and ruthlessness, they rubbed

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abrasively on Eritrean sensitivities; they spread the infection of a national spirit; they unwittingly amplified the Voice of Cairo. The Emperor's complacent lifetime belief in and dependence on the infallibility of trickery and bribery persuaded him that the fat sincecures he offered all of the abliging Assembly's participants in the "unanimous" vote of union would be sufficient to keep a grip on Eritrea. In reserve, he had a growing army and police. But as Speaker Reed said of the US acquisition of the Phillipines, "we have bought 10,000,000 Malays at two dollars a head unpicked and nobody knows what it will cost to pick them." The Emperor and Ethiopia are now finding the bill for the acquisition of Eritrea is mounting.

Eritrean Christians -- nearly 40 percent (according to the Consulate General's best estimate) of the province's population -- are proud of their separate language, Tigrinya, which they share with the neighboring province of Tigre, and convinced of their longer history and educational and cultural superiority to the Amharas. They are disgusted with the extinction of their self-government, even though autonomous Eritrea was far poorer and financially less able (although technically and educationally far better qualified) than the IEG to promote development. There are therefore very few Eritrean Christians still in Eritrea who are actively loyal to the IEG rule. Most are either completely passive or grumblers against it.

Eritrean Moslems -- also about 40 percent of the population -- are persuaded that Ethiopian Christian rule will never give them an even break. Ethiopian laws provide for equality of opportunity for Moslems throughout the Empire. However, not unlike conditions in some parts of the US, these admirable laws are a long way from being completely effective in assuring genuine equality and freedom from social, economic and governmental discrimination to this large (in Eritrea) minority.

Even if the Ethiopians' performance came to match the words of their laws, the Moslem population would take a long time to lose their belief that they are victimized by the dominant religious and governing class. As is, they point to the paucity of Moslem officials in government, dismissing the small number extant as Judases. They note the disproportionate scarcity of Moslem children in the schools, and the dearth of secondary schools in the Moslem western and Red Sea lowlands, ignoring the semi-nomadic nature of the population there and the tendency of Moslems generally to approach secular education cautiously. They point to the requirement that "morals" be taught in the government schools -- by Ethiopian Orthodox priests -- and to the existence of Orthodoxy as the established State religion. Although schools in predominantly Moslem areas are dismissed on Friday as well as Sunday, in other areas Moslem children must make do on their Friday holy day with being dismissed an hour early in the afternoon. And they ignore the pre-eminent role of Moslems in all Ethiopian commerce.

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The primitive 20 percent pagan population of Eritrea, concentrated in the southwest corner of the province, is completely a-political and entirely outside the economic and social organization of the province. Its loyalty to any government or to anything outside of tribe and family is non-existent.

With an evenly balanced Moslem-Christian population ratio, with both groups hostile to the Amhara hegemony, with Cairo and other Arab centers sounding the call to nationalism, and with Communist powers perhaps exploiting the opportunity it is not surprising that in 1961 the group known as the Eritrean Liberation Front came into existence. Led by Moslems with one or two Christian exiles as adherents, it was established abroad even before remorseless erosion of the federal statute had finally destroyed the UN structure. With the regime in Addis Ababa inured to peripheral problems, with the new Africanist directions of his foreign policy occupying more and more of HIM's time and efforts, with the dynamics of Red Sea evolution driving Ethiopia into closer ties with Israel, with developmental efforts almost uniquely concentrated in Addis and its environs, with the power magnet of the capital luring more and more of the Eritrean Christian elites into the central apparatus of government, and with Yemen, Aden and other stirring Moslem examples, the ingredients for an insurgency were prepared.

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Addis AbabaC. The Present Government of Eritrea

The provincial government of Eritrea is unique among Ethiopia's fourteen provinces. It still possesses a large carry-over of qualified civil servants from Italian and especially British days, and the government structure is immeasurably more elaborate than in any other province. (Neighboring provinces have a Governor General, his deputy and a couple of dozen lesser officials, mostly incompetent.) The Eritrean Government is a miniaturized IEG, with counterpart departments for most of the Addis ministries. There are about 10,000 employees on the government payroll in Eritrea, but three-quarters of these are part-time or low-paid jobs--police rank and file, messengers, doorkeepers, janitors, street-sweepers and the like.

There are some 370 senior civil service positions listed in the Provincial Government Officials List. Except for 47 third country nationals, they are about 80 percent Eritreans (57 percent Christian Eritrean, 23 percent Moslem Eritrean) and 20 percent Amharas or members of other non-Eritrean tribes. (The number of Eritreans in higher IEG office outside of Eritrea, however, far exceeds the number of "carpetbaggers" in Eritrea.) The Amhara 20 percent are concentrated in centralized IEG agencies' Asmara branches (IHA, IBTE), in Assab subdivision, and in the Governor General's office.

In the military, Amharas are concentrated in the Army, Navy, and Air Force, whose officer and enlisted ranks in Eritrea are overwhelmingly non-Eritrean. The Police, however, are almost entirely Eritrean.

The Eritrean provincial government, being better staffed and trained than those in other provinces, engages in more development and welfare projects than do other provincial establishments. The IEG also provides more development efforts in Eritrea than in any other province except that of Shoa which includes Addis Ababa. In the last five years there have been constructed under government auspices in Eritrea six large schools, several hospitals, and two substantial development industries--the Massawa cement plant and the Assab oil refinery. IBTE, EELPA, and IHA have made substantial improvements in the electrical and communications net and in highway service and maintenance. Over ten million seedlings for reforestation have been distributed by the Agriculture Department.

The story is not all roses. The Ethiopian Development Bank has lent to Eritrean-based enterprises only 10 percent of its total loans since it opened, and these have been chiefly to large Italian-owned industries. (In 1965 less than one percent of its loans for the year went to Eritrea. 1966 figures are not available.) Eighty percent of its total loans have been in Shoa Province, i.e., Addis Ababa and environs. Similarly the new Ethiopian Investment Corporation has also devoted only ten percent of its loans to Eritrea, but most of this amount went to finance the IEG-owned Massawa cement plant. Again 80 percent of the "sugar" went to sweet Shoa.

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Eritreans, whether Christian or Moslem, believe that their province is being exploited financially for the benefit of other areas. The province unquestionably produces more tax and customs revenue than it consumes. This revenue may support the central government's expenditures for itself and for less prosperous provinces, in the same way that New Yorkers and Californians help finance both Washington, D. C. and Mississippi. Without existence of a strong national sentiment, however, this may seem intolerable to the taxpayers. The problem is not unique to Ethiopia; Yugoslavia and many others have experienced the North-South imbalance and have sought, with varying success, to achieve national balance by having the richer finance the poorer. The Emperor's view that he was compelled to create a national capital as part of his dual centralizing and Africanist vocations is justifiable. Indeed, it has been rewarding in both economic and political terms, in attracting tourists, industry, foreign aid and attention, and in performing an act of self-resuscitation as the senior statesman of Africa in the "capital of Africa." But these attainments do not diminish the bitterness of a province that began the Union far in advance, administratively and economically, of Shoa.

The Eritrean provincial budget is about Eth.\$30,000,000. Land, income, and excise tax collections in the province total about Eth.\$24 million. Customs collected at the ports of Massawa and Assab are said by the Governor General to amount to some Eth.\$100 million, of which about Eth.\$20 million is from items imported for use in Eritrea. If the Governor General's figures are correct, the total revenue of Eritrean origin is Eth.\$44 million ( $24 + 20$ ) and the Eritrean contribution toward national finances is therefore on the order of Eth.\$14 million a year ( $44 - 30$ ) or about one-third of total revenues generated from the province.

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D. IEG Assets and Attitudes

The central government possesses considerable assets in Eritrea. It has a well developed governmental and economic infra-structure on the basis of which rapid economic development could be based. The province has, after the capital province of Shoa, the largest industrial activity in Ethiopia. It probably possesses a larger reservoir of educated or skilled manpower - thanks to Italian and British schools and training efforts. In this respect Eritrea is not unlike Scotland on the occasion of its union with England in 1707, and like Scotland its best prospect is probably to continue the southward export of its ablest manpower, which has already begun, in order to end up, Scots fashion, running the Empire of which it became a reluctant part.

A major Ethiopian asset in Eritrea, which is now showing some signs of erosion, is the highland Eritrean Christian population, which shares with other Ethiopian Christians a deep attachment to the Orthodox Church and a profound distrust and suspicion of Moslems. While these Eritrean Christians are certainly not pro-Amhara, in the past they have been even less pro-Moslem. This has provided a safeguard against the efforts of the predominantly Moslem ELF to bring about the separation of Eritrea and Ethiopia.

An analysis of Christian Eritrean attitudes, by profession, indicates that at present senior government officials are generally loyal to the IEG, although they are willing to and do compound with the ELF by financial contributions to avoid being singled out for assassination and to reensure their careers against the possibility of an ultimate ELF success. The Police, being generally Eritreans, demonstrate the reinsurance phenomenon by a high rate of leakage of information to the ELF; the policemen also generally strive to adopt a neutral stance and fire on the ELF only in self-defense.

Middle and lower government officials also try for neutrality, although in most cases their sentiments lean toward Eritrean autonomy or independence, not necessarily by way of the ELF. Teachers appear to be more sympathetic toward the IEG, owing to strong suspicions of the ELF's Islamic majority. Students and workers are perhaps as much as 75% sympathetic toward the Eritrean independence and to the ELF, which is fighting for it. [redacted] evidence is that about 25% of government secondary school students in Asmara are active dues-paying ELF members.) On the other hand, the Christian peasantry is deeply suspicious of and opposed to the ELF for traditional religious reasons, except in areas where it has had the dubious pleasure of encountering Ethiopian Army tactics of pillaging, raping, and indiscriminate shooting. Among the peasants, the ELF is carefully striving to improve its image by exhibiting a friendly and correct attitude.

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The Ethiopian government and people are absolutely convinced of the necessity to retain possession of Eritrea. The province contains Ethiopia's only seacoast and both of its seaports, and current threats to French-occupied Djibouti by Somalia are unlikely to reduce this Ethiopian concern. From a strategic point of view, Ethiopians are aware that their country was invaded from Eritrea in 1935, 1896, 1876 and 1867.

The depth of Ethiopian conviction of the necessity for clinging to Eritrea is strikingly shown by the recent ruckus in the National Union of Ethiopian University students in Addis Ababa. Composed of politically active students, most of whom are political leftists and therefore impatient of or outright hostile to the IEG, the organization split violently over the attitude to be adopted toward Eritrea. The Amhara (and other Ethiopian) majority bitterly condemned their equally radical Eritrean colleagues for supporting the ELF. (An Eritrean source reports also that the ELF last January took the position that it would be undesirable to assassinate the Emperor on his visit to Eritrea at the request of the Ethiopian radicals, who hoped to profit from the Emperor's demise to reform the IEG radically. In view of the NUEUS indication of Ethiopian sentiments about Eritrea, this ELF decision was unquestionably sound.)

Another factor strengthening the IEG in Eritrea might be defined as "the hidden hand of history." Eritrea is historically part of the Empire and the ties of culture, tradition, religion, and linguistic affinity are stronger than they may appear on the surface. The ramshackle Ethiopian Empire has held together a comparatively long time in spite of geographic, linguistic, religious and cultural divisions which would appear to make it an impossibility. Perhaps God, rather than being, as alleged, a Brazilian, is really an Ethiopian and a Copt as well!

#### E. ELF Strategy, Tactics and Options

The ELF insurgent tactics have followed the classic guerrilla pattern of ambush and harassment of IEG forces over the last several years. Their guerrilla units have rarely accepted open combat even with small units of the Ethiopian Army or Police. Most of the time these units, which are over 95% Moslem lowlanders, have been reasonably careful to avoid abusing the peasant or nomad population in the predominantly Moslem areas in which they have hitherto operated. ELF "tax" collections from Eritrean and foreign businessmen both there and in the highland towns have been scaled to the ability of the victim to pay and have in any case been no higher than the legal government's assessments. The ELF commandos obtain fresh meat and some grain from Eritrea's populace,

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but are supplied with other needs from the Sudan (tea, sugar, ammunition, and weapons), which serves as their ultimate safe haven from pursuit and their R&R area.

The Sudanese government, notwithstanding the sympathy for Eritrean fellow Moslems which is endemic among its own population, has generally made reasonable efforts to avoid blatantly un-neutral use of its territory by the ELF. (The exception to this policy was the period from the fall of the Abboud regime in September 1964 until the late spring of 1965, when both radical and conservative Sudanese political elements courted the Moslem vote by throwing open the flood-gates to supply, training, and operation of ELF commandos from Sudanese territory.) Nevertheless, the Sudanese government is probably not efficient enough, even if it were sufficiently motivated, to be able to prevent its petty officials from winking at the smuggling of arms to the ELF and at the travel of known ELF operatives - generally in civvies - to and from the Eritrean border. The Sudanese border town of Kassala is the ELF's field HQ, a safe haven and a depot.

ELF operations obviously require more than a friendly, neutral Sudan. The ELF's principal benefactor is Syria, which provides Czech weaponry, propaganda, and latest guerrilla training for selected leaders. About 100 Eritreans were recently graduated from a "special commando school" in Syria and 100 more are entering training there now. Some financial aid evidently also comes from the UAR, together with ammunition and propaganda assistance. Iraq provides spaces in its military schools for Eritreans and Cuba is reported to have taken 21 Eritreans for guerrilla training. The Saudi Arabian government provides financial help only, designating it to be used for "Moslem" causes. Kuwait and perhaps other Islamic states also contribute to the ELF fisc. The extent of Somali assistance is largely political although it may well include a trickle of funds in addition to provisions of passports to ELF leaders. The GSR is 100% sympathetic to the ELF diversion behind enemy Ethiopia's left flank and in Arab and Western capitals there is also contact between the two groups.

It should be noted that the ELF's Moslem allies and supporters appear to count on the inevitable evolution of Ethiopia toward Islamic status. Certainly in the last 100 years Islam has made perceptible inroads in converting both pagan and Christian Ethiopians. The Sudan government seems to believe, and the UAR may share its belief, that a division of Ethiopia into successor state fragments is unnecessary if the whole is destined to become another Islamic power.

Both the UAR and Sudan are members of the OAU, both are committed at least on paper, not to meddle in other African nations' affairs. Both also have an interest in avoiding open enmity with the Emperor. Sudan fears Ethiopian involvement in its Southern problem and the perspective of additional pressures on its fragile

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internal political balance; in brief, Sudan needs tranquility. The UAR with its difficult financial headaches at home and its pre-eminent current interests in the Arabian peninsula (Yemen, Aden, Saudi Arabia) plus its continuing problems with Syria, Jordan and Israel, is not anxious to arouse the Ethiopians with their grip on Africa's leading organization in Addis.

The Syrians, and to a lesser extent the Iraqis, see Ethiopia in an Israeli context. Both inflate Israeli assistance to Ethiopia and equate it as tantamount to Israeli-stimulated repression by Ethiopians of its Moslems. Neither has an African vocation to inhibit their actions.

Furthermore it is my long-held contention that the more extremist Arab states including Nasser's UAR, have a long-range goal of eliminating or at least diminishing Western influence in the Red Sea Basin; Kagnew station in Asmara is one key component of the U.S. presence. And in this objective, there is a congruence of Communist and Arab Socialist interest.

Estimates of ELF field strength are imprecise. A recent secret assessment by the Ethiopian army reckons that the ELF has four companies of between 250 and 300 armed guerrillas each. Basic supply and hospital camps in the Kassala area are staffed by an estimated 100. In addition the recent 100 graduates will soon be returning from Syria, probably charged with the task of organizing another company or two. The ELF can also draw almost at will from the large numbers of untrained, nomadic Beni Amer who are available for one operation or even for a brief campaign. The ELF underground in Asmara and other towns includes at least a couple of hundred part-time agents, chiefly messengers and "tax-collectors" until now, but perhaps assassins as well in the near future. And, of course, the ELF operated in a largely friendly environment in all Moslem areas, having easy access to provisions, information and safe havens.

ELF tactics can be characterized as still in Phase I of Mao's classic schedule of guerrilla operations. They have progressed from recruitment, training and some arms raids on police stations to the point of being about to enter Phase II - increased tempo of raids and attacks on communications, harrying enemy units when they pause, ambushing supply columns and capturing weapons. Curiously, the ELF has made little use of terror thus far except among IEG informers and has carried out few assassinations outside this stratum. (The Eritrean chief of a Ministry of Interior-operated informants ring, and the head of government anti-guerrilla irregulars, were assassinated within the last two months.) Both Amhara and Eritrean officials have been largely immune. One possible cause for this conservative ELF use of assassination at the officials' level is that Ethiopia (and foreign business) targets have been willing to pay substantial "protection" to the ELF to avoid being singled out. For example, the Vice Governor General of Eritrea, a leading IEG "loyalist," reportedly shelled out E\$50,000 of IEG funds to the ELF last year for this kind of longevity insurance. It is possible that

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recent intensification of IEG punitive use of troops in the Moslem lowlands may lead to a change in the ELF's predominantly fiscal approach to the use of terror.

If the ELF tactics have been soundly based, its strategy is puzzling. Statements of ELF representatives to various US diplomats indicate that the organization is relying on generating enough publicity and support to persuade the United States to undo the Ethiopian sabotage of Eritrean autonomy and to hand Eritrea its independence on a platter of resolutions. This hope is obviously a will-o'-the-wisp, given the UN's usual practice of accepting on its agenda only inter-country conflicts of both extreme local nastiness and of unconcern to the big two.

ELF hopes appear really to rest on escalating its guerrilla operation, which to date have been more of a nuisance than a military character, to the Phase II level and continuing them for a long time, in the hope that the Emperor's ultimate demise may bring a fragmentation of Ethiopia or that the Horn of Africa-Red Sea Basin situation may bring about open warfare of a strong neighboring country against Ethiopia.

An important part of the ELF's ability to achieve and maintain Phase II and a prerequisite to any faint hopes of reaching Phase III is to achieve a base of support among Eritrean Christians by moving them from their present suspicion, passivity, or at most financial aid, to activism. The ELF's hierarchy significantly includes a layering of Christians disproportionate to the number of Christians among ELF adherents. The accession to the ELF in late February of former Eritrean unionist leader Tedla Bairu, a Christian (Lutheran rather than Ethiopian Orthodox), and his biweekly propaganda broadcasts for it have been a significant gain.

My Eritrean contacts within the Ethiopian Establishment in Addis state that the no longer significant Eritrean Liberation Movement (predominantly Christian) is reaching a working agreement with the ELF as a result of Tedla's adherence. However, they quote Wolde-ab Mariam, the erstwhile head of the ELM, as being highly critical of Tedla for ignoring Islam as "the greatest threat to Eritrea and to Ethiopia." Wolde-ab has told his contacts here that Tedla defected to the ELF because (a) he was bought by the UAR, (b) he is determined to play a role in Eritrea's future and (c) he wishes to settle scores with Ras Andergatchew and his spouse. Perhaps there will be a slightly greater flow of activists from the Christian community to the ELF in the future, but the mass, like Wolde-ab, will remain more than reluctant to align themselves to a predominant Moslem and Arab-supported movement. Wolde-ab, in the view of some loyal Eritreans, should be rehabilitated by the IEG; I would not be surprised if the Emperor did soon seek secret contacts with Wolde-ab who is not without influence in Eritrea.

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There are no indications that the Arab arms and possibly Communist input to the ELF has yet produced a Communist or even extremist political program. If the ELF wishes to exploit Tedla, it will be compelled to be ideologically neutral since he has a distaste for political extremism. In any case Communist influences are probably acting as cautiously with the ELF as with the Algerian FLN during its rise, to avoid offending Moslem sympathies.

There has been more than a modicum of curiosity among Western and IEG officials here in Bulgarian commercial enterprises in Ethiopia. The profligate expenditures by the Bulgarian RODOPA firm, the unaccountability of millions of dollars (either in leakages to the ELF and/or to private accounts) and the discovery of clandestine Bulgarian arms shipments in Massawa, have raised eyebrows, particularly since none of the manifold Bulgarian activities in Eritrea appear to be economically viable. Also in recent months, there has been considerably more Soviet Embassy travel to Eritrea as well as a year by year escalation of the level of Soviet naval representation at the annual IEN graduation exercises at Massawa, last year's drawing no less than the Soviet CNO and a large ultra-modern electronic missile destroyer. In recent weeks the Bulgars have found enough funds in Addis governmental institutions (with bribery?) to revive their meat operations on a modest scale and to hire personnel in anticipation of finally starting their long-delayed fish-meal plant at Massawa.

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Addis AbabaF. Present IEG Strategy and Tactics Against the ELF

The Ethiopian government now has no strategy worthy of the name against Eritrean dissidence. Its policy is to grit its teeth and hang on to the province by military means and at all costs.

IEG tactics, however, have shown some evolution. In the last several weeks the IEG has begun using a system of fortified villages or collecting areas in which to assemble Moslem lowlanders under guard and supervision. Theoretically, this "pacification" program will enable IEG forces to seize as suspects any persons other than individual herders found outside the areas. It is also reliably reported to be clearing a cordon sanitaire or uninhabited zone of up to fifty miles' width along the Sudanese frontier. The IEG has also made sporadic attempts to evolve a unified command, hampered by disagreements over tactical doctrine between police and army, and between the IEG and the Governor-General and has made intermittent use of aerial strafing and bombing by the IEAF against suspected ELF supply points and concentrations. At present the Army, under the CG 2nd Division, is in control of operations and has succeeded in relegating police, including even three Israeli-trained commando police battalions, to garrison duties in the towns. Since the Army is in effect a foreign (to Eritrea) occupying force, with negligible local linguistic capability, its treatment of Eritreans, whether suspects or merely local population, is usually brutal and its intelligence gathering close to nil. Its "pacification" was in February 1967 deliberately given free rein in the western lowlands. The consequences may soon be visible in ELF counter-measures.

Apart from its fortified village campaign, IEG employment of its forces is regularly on a basis of reaction to incidents, interspersed with battalion or larger area sweeps. When a police or army post or patrol is hit by the ELF, sizeable reinforcements are dispatched as quickly as possible. Owing to the broken country in most of Eritrea, reinforcements may be 24 hours or more in arriving. Except for past police commando efforts, there is little regular, aggressive patrolling off of the roads and vehicular trails. Company sized units may sweep the area around an incident site, probably burning the villages, or at least confiscating livestock or food supplies. Villagers are regarded as guilty of aiding the enemy until proved innocent, which is difficult for them to do -- even ~~xxx~~ in the unlikely event they know Amharic.

In the autumn of 1966, the ELF moved in some strength into the area of eastern Acchelle Guzai division in the rugged country lying between the Asmara-Addis highway and the Red Sea. The Army responded with a four and one-half battalion sweep of the area, which in three months resulted in heavy damage to the Moslem and Christian population's property and considerable molesting of their persons, in a half-dozen ELF suspects killed and a few captured, and in most of the ELF forces leaving the area to return to the larger, more familiar western lowlands. Numerous complaints at the Army's conduct and demands for redress were made to the Governor General by both Christian and Moslem leaders in the affected area, with no known result.

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F. Present IEG Strategy and Tactics Against the ELF (Continued)

IEG response to the defection to the ELF of the chief Eritrean architect of Eritrean-Ethiopian union, TEDLA Bairu, was hasty and ill-judged. Stung by this loss, the IEG responded with an immediate sarcastic denunciation of him as a traitor to his Christian (Lutheran) faith. This followed increasingly open allusions which have been made since November 1966 by IEG local authorities to the religious -- Christians vs. Moslems -- aspect of the Eritrean dissident movement. Thus at the time when the LEF is stressing its inter-denominationalism, the IEG is invoking the phrases of holy war to rally its surly Christian subjects -- thereby insuring the fuller mobilization against it of its disaffected Moslem subjects in Eritrea and through the Empire.

In February, 1967, the 2nd Division made its first "rattisage" in Asmara. From all accounts, the IEG is extremely pleased with the results of this first door-to-door sweep of the Moslem quarter which netted arms caches, a number of influential ELF activists and documents.

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G. IEG Prospects and Options

There is no doubt of the IEG's resolution and determination to hang on to Eritrea regardless of difficulties. This view is shared by all Amharas regardless of their political coloration, and by other tribal members of the establishment and younger elite. If it came to a crunch the IEG would probably choose to devote its resources to the retention of Eritrea, even at the cost of seeing the Ogaden escape its clutches, a perspective not displeasing to Somalia. The real question concerns the IEG's ability, in the face of such other threats as Somali irredentism, Galla disaffection, and Egypto-Islamic expansionism, to succeed in its aim.

The overwhelming probability is that, without markedly increased economic development in Eritrea, some degree of restoration of Eritrean local autonomy, a marked improvement in conditions in the Red Sea/<sup>Basin</sup> and greater political evolution in Ethiopia as a whole, or a combination of these four factors, the prospects are for a continued worsening of the Eritrean "ulcer" in the Ethiopian body politic. In the context of other threats to Ethiopian security, stability, and unity, the dissolution of the Empire could well result within the next five years.

There are a number of courses of action which, if adopted by the IEG, could reverse this trend. They may be classified as military, economic, foreign policy, and political measures. All of them would require increased material resources, and, collectively, the additional resources are undoubtedly well beyond the present means of and demands upon the IEG. Some degree of US or other foreign input would thus be required for their adoption and for their effective application.

Military courses of action which would improve the IEG's position in Eritrea are based on adoption of an intelligent long-term rather than a ruthless short-term policy. The IEG should build up its commando police force to 3,000-5,000 strong in Eritrea and employ these units' cross-country talents and linguistic and intelligence capabilities as the main anti-guerrilla striking force. The more ruthless, unwieldy, and alien army ~~units~~ while retaining its primary mission of guarding against aggression, should be limited to garrison duty, static blocking positions, and use as the anvil for the striking force to operate on. An important part of this change would be to indoctrinate both commando police and army to cease alienating the peasant and nomad populace by pillaging and molesting it, to pay for requisitioned food and supplies, and to launch large-scale civic action efforts. An "open arms" amnesty system which should include substantial rewards for information and surrendered weapons and a program of effective resettlement of ELF defectors should be initiated.

The present army system of fortified village concentrations in the western lowlands and along the border should be continued, but only with proper treatment for the affected population to include medical care, schools, and adequate food supplies.

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G. IEG Prospects and Options (Continued)

One of the greatest deficiencies in present IEG security operations is the almost total absence of effective intelligence gathering. The IEG now relies on spies and ELF traitors, who have a high mortality rate. More money and tighter controls over its employment is necessary to improve and expand the existing intelligence program. One area in which the ELF is vulnerable is in its "tax" collections in the towns. It should not be difficult, particularly among mulcted third country nationals who dominate the Asmara business community, to obtain identification of the collectors in return for complete secrecy and the guaranteed refund of any "taxes" paid to the ELF.

Obviously, substantial additional resources would be necessary for the above improved IEG military measures. Some of them could be obtained from a better (and greater?) allocation of present Israeli and German assistance to the police; but the USG would at the minimum be required to assist in retraining the army and in provisioning medical, education, and food supply programs for the fortified villages.

H.H. ASRATE Kassa, the Governor General of Eritrea claims to have recognized that the basic component for Eritrean counter-insurgency is in economic development rather than military suppression. Asrate has alleged total dis-interest in this approach on the part of the central authorities in Addis. But the IEG counters that the Governor General exerts unremitting pressure on it for still more arms and troops; this latter allegation is supported by well-placed Eritreans in Addis who complain that the Governor wants more of everything without defining an overall policy, a judgment which fits our experience with the dilettante that Asrate is.

An economic development policy should be adopted for Eritrea. But why Eritrea alone, ask many of the more progressive minds in the IEG. Is it not equally true that the Ogaden, not to mention almost every other province, requires additional resources? Would not a special program for Eritrea only educate other provinces that overt rebellion is the lever to pry funds out of the IEG? The Minister of Planning and Development told the Ambassador last week that it was "politically impossible" to formulate a special program for Eritrea since every province was now awakening and since he was under great pressure to draft a five-year plan which would be nationally responsive.

One element contributing to a sensible resolution of this dilemma would, in our judgment, be a community development program concentrated on water resources in the more arid portions of the province, on public health facilities and on education particularly and initially in areas where Christian villages border Moslem nomads. (One of the recurrent complaints of Christian Eritreans is that a net retrogression has occurred in education because standards imposed by the Ministry of Education have in fact led to a smaller number of children attending elementary schools than under the British.) Such a program need not be restricted to Eritrea; indeed it could be launched in several provinces and the Minister of Planning is thinking along such lines.

## G. IEG Prospects and Options (Continued)

ment participation in modernizing plantation agriculture is a promising sector. Italian private entrepreneurs have been moving in this direction; late last year, the Provincial Government found funds for participation in the new large Ghinda plantation which will be managed by the very successful Italian firm operating the Elaberet integrated farming operation near Keren and which will create thousands of jobs.

The Central Government must also rule clearly that it favors investment in Eritrea; for reasons that are still unclear but which have had discouraging impact on those Eritreans who wish their homeland to remain part of the Empire, the IEG appears to have blocked the establishment of a Fiat assembly plant near Asmara. Whether or not the charge is true, the handling of a matter that could be easily misinterpreted was bobbled badly by the Addis authorities. If the idea takes even further hold that the IEG is opposed to Eritrean evolution in the economic field, it will only incite greater resentment and opposition to the Amharas.

Ethiopian foreign policy offers another sector of potential improvement. A more intensive effort with Saudi Arabia and Sudan to limit the assistance now reaching the ELF from or through these countries is essential to the furtherance of stability. The present Sudanese government has given evidence of its inclination to cooperate with the IEG, if only because of its vulnerability in southern Sudan to possible IEG retaliation and because its awareness of long-term Egyptian interests. Extreme care should be taken by the IEG not to upset the GOS applecart, since the GOS policy of "neutrality" on Eritrea is domestically unpopular.

With Saudi Arabia the task is somewhat more difficult since it consists of persuading King Faisal that he would not damage his religious credentials as the Islamic leader by shutting off financial aid to the ELF. In this area, the ELF's own emphasis of its bi-religious nature might be used against it. Basically, however, Faisal needs to be sold on the community of Ethiopia and Saudi interests as opponents of Nasserist radicalism and southward expansionism. Recent events in Yemen could be exploited by Ethiopia and its friends.

The most important new course of action for the IEG to adopt, if it is to reverse the course of Eritrean insurgency, lies in the field of political concessions. Psychologically it is the most difficult step for an Emperor whose first 50 years of power have been devoted to centralization. However, without some concession to Eritreans' desire for local self-government, the loyalty of neither Christian nor Moslem Eritreans is likely to be recovered or strengthened. The present IEG plan - - still only on the drawing board - - to establish local self-government at the awraja (county) level would provide an initial step in the right direction. It should be put into effect in Eritrea first of all and should be accompanied or followed closely by re-creation of a provincial assembly and provincial government with as much degree of local control over schools, highways, public works, agriculture, and public health, as the IEG could be compelled to stomach.

Preceding restoration of some Eritrean political autonomy, the IEG should give serious consideration to the redrawing of provincial boundaries. There is no valid reason for the IEG to perpetuate arbitrary colonial frontiers within

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G. IEG Prospects and Options (Continued)

belong by all ethnic and economic sense to the province of Wollo. North of Assab to the Port of Zula, the Red Sea coast is more naturally a part of Tigre Province whose borders already include most of the Danakil inhabitants.

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## H. Recommended U.S. Policy

U.S. policy for Eritrea cannot be determined in isolation. For some years, I have lamented the Department's unwillingness to view Ethiopia in a non-African context. In brief, my argument has been that the Red Sea Basin comprises a separate and distinct area of US interest, that problems such as Eritrea and the Ethio-Somali dispute cannot be detached from a more important region that comprises Egyptian, Israeli, Sudanese, Arabian, Ethiopian, Somali -- and Communist -- interests, and that there is a congruence of Nasserist, Baathist, Soviet and Somali interests in the elimination or, at the least, significant reduction in Western influence in the Red Sea area.

Happily, this repeated cry of despair has finally been heard and a review of this area is now underway by a State-Defense team under the distinguished leadership of Ambassador Julius Holmes. In attendance of the results of this work, only a few tentative conclusions can be offered:

1. As long as Kagnaw Station is deemed strategically indispensable to the United States, it is preferable for the US to stimulate and support progressive Ethiopian policies designed to stabilize Eritrea. This preference derives from my convictions that (a) the US could not maintain Kagnaw if the ELF were to achieve its goal of an independent state since the Nasserist, Soviet, Baathist ideologies would preclude the presence of a military, "neo-colonialist" base and (b) our relationship with Ethiopia, not to mention the line-up of forces in the area, offers such little room for maneuver with the ELF that we cannot bid effectively for preeminent influence with the ELF.
2. As long as the US is committed to its present views of African development -- to support of pluralistic societies of viable economic dimensions (e.g. Congo and Nigeria) -- it is necessary to support Eritrea's integration in Ethiopia. The separation of Eritrea would in all probability incite other separatism in Ethiopia and in other parts of Africa without adding stability or viability to a bi-religious, multi-ethnic Eritrea.
3. Border adjustments between Ethiopia and the Sudan need not be precluded. An end to the division of the Beni Amer by the Ethio-Sudanese border, for example, could be contemplated at least in the abstract if a suitable trade-off of Sudanese territory more compatible with Ethiopia could be arranged. While this prospect is not a propitious one at present, it should not be excluded from all thinking for all time.

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4. Any encouragement by US officials to the ELF, any sign of concern for the safety of Kagnew and its personnel, will in all likelihood be interpreted by its leadership as an incitement to blackmail. Yet we are ill-placed to pay and the amounts available for such purposes would soon prove insufficient. On the contrary, while the ELF is still not a very potent force, it is more advantageous to reiterate our neutrality and to imply that any attack on Kagnew's operations, would probably lead to greater US support for Ethiopia -- and thus greater difficulties for the ELF. (In this connection, the outcome of the Vietnam war will, of course, influence ELF thinking; while the US is committed to defeating the "war of liberation" in Vietnam, our actions there can by inference serve to deter ELF anti-Kagnew planning. It is also possible, if not probable, that at the present time Soviet tactics are designed to avoid actions which would spur greater US involvement in the Red Sea and that the Soviets would prefer not to risk assaults on Kagnew. It is also possible that the Syrian view of Eritrea is so focussed on Israel that it too would favor Kagnew's non-involvement although any statement about the Syrians is an assault on reason.)

5. The US should seek to maintain the maximum degree of political neutrality in Eritrea insofar as the ELF is concerned. The MAAG presence should be kept at its present inconsequential level; Kagnew should be reminded periodically and in clear directives that under no circumstances is it to give cause to be regarded as a "military base" or, as unfortunately was the case in 1965, can it become involved as a security asset of the IEG and its Provincial Governor; any US material support for the police or for the armed forces should be screened wherever possible by other nation's advisors and AID/W should be dissuaded from insisting on PSD personnel accompanying any police equipment to Eritrea, if that is a future US decision.

6. US political influence in Ethiopia (including Eritrea) should continue to focus on progressive measures. Most important of these is the liberalization of the IEG itself since this evolution will produce the kinds of attitudes requisite to progressive measures in Eritrea. Not the least of these latter measures are (a) the decentralization law under study by Parliament and its quickest possible implementation in Eritrea and (b) a greater delegation of authority to Eritreans for Eritrean affairs including the assignment to the province of a significant number of elite Eritreans now serving in the central government. (I might note that the acceleration of progressive legislation and of structural reform is proceeding in Ethiopia for the first time at a rate commensurate with our minimal hopes and that the likelihood of maintaining or increasing the pace is not without hope although dependent upon many unpredictable factors such as the longevity of the Emperor, the degree of external pressures, etc.)

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7. US social and economic influence must begin to be exerted in Eritrea. It was a grievous error for AID to close its office in Eritrea in early 1963. While it can be argued that the IEG's response to Eritrean development needs has been largely negative, the US action was to give unwitting backing to the IEG's policies. Community development teams, shadows of the operations which we have launched in, say, Thailand's northeast, for accelerated rural development, should be initiated in both Eritrea and in neighboring Tigre by a judicious mix of Peace Corps Volunteers and of AID materials. I am confident that if carefully prepared and executed, even if only on a modest scale at the beginning, local self-help response will be encouraging. Eventually, if not at the outset, there will also be an IEG matching response. Title II PL 480 programs could be very usefully employed in connection with and in support of such teams. I would specifically recommend (and am already requesting the planning) of emergency expenditures for FY 68, exclusive of Title II for such programs. (At the risk of repeating myself, it is much more in the US interest, in my view, to use funds for development in Eritrea which is part of a "country of concentration" in the new US Development Policy for Africa, than to continue ~~waste~~ ~~in Somaliland~~ unproductive programs elsewhere.)

8. The US, as part of its overall policy to maintain restraints on the arms race in the Horn and to disengage the army from anti-civilian actions in Ethiopia, should indirectly assist the Emergency Police. I have previously made the arguments for supplying about US\$300,000 a year in hand weapons and equipment for Emergency Police Units. There is no need to repeat the rationale here since it is spelled out in my memo to Mr. Gaud in February. Since such action would require a Presidential decision to approve supporting assistance, which is a highly unlikely prospect, we should find means to supply non-weapons equipment in order to permit the Police to buy its weapons commercially. To possible arguments that the US could "free" funds by aiding the regular police, my answer is that it would not liberate monies since the regular police are in great need of all kinds of equipment and would merely absorb supplies without affecting the Eritrean emergency. Also, it should be emphasized that the West Germans and Israelis (with whom we have good relations) are training the Emergency Police in an effective way; it is to our political advantage vis a vis the ELF to keep them in front in this sector while deriving benefits in our relations with the IEG and from the increased efficiency of the Emergency Police. The US should not supply equipment unless the IEG adopts policies for its armed forces which are compatible with our current advice and unless the units are first formed. My support for the Emergency Police augmentation is consistent with my belief that while there cannot be security without development, there cannot be development without security; and with my conviction that the US must use a carrot as well as a stick to persuade the IEG to adopt the strategy and organization we have put forward for Ethiopia's national security.

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9. The US should support more actively efforts to convince Saudi Arabia, above all, but other Arab and Western states (particularly Italy) as well that it is not in their interest to have Ethiopia dismembered. Iran could also play a more active role in Ethiopia if the regional implications were clearly outlined to the Shah.

10. The US need not lose Kagnew in a year or two if it were to risk a Micawber policy in Eritrea; but the odds are that our present masterly inactivity in Eritrea and towards the insurgency will not only diminish the durability of Kagnew but also contribute to the dissolution of Ethiopia. Only last week the value of our relationship with Ethiopia, in an area context, was again demonstrated in the evacuation of our nationals from Yemen; it is not overstating the case to say that there are not a half dozen countries in the world that would have cooperated so easily and effectively with the US in a similar situation. Nor is it beyond the arena of predictability to state the study underway will conclude that the US does have interests in the Red Sea Basin and that the US must be able to look to certain regional components as friendly powers. If, to use Thomas Hardy's apt phrase, "this is a time of the breaking-up of nations," we should decide whether we are to be spectators of a process deemed to be inevitable or participants in an effort adjudged worthy of our constructive inputs.

11. Finally, if we choose to remain Micawbers, there is, in my judgement, no need for any precipitous action concerning Kagnew. While it is manifestly unwise to load unendingly new missions and more personnel on Kagnew and the weak reed of Eritrea, and while alternatives should be identified, there is no imperative need at this time to reduce our use of Kagnew. When and if an active threat manifests itself, our reactions, be they in the form of reduction of personnel or of dependents or some other direction, will affect the attitudes and plans of both the IEG and ELF. Therefore it is a weapon in reserve for timely and judicious use.

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